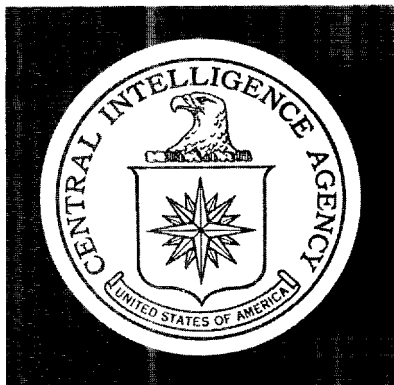


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

RECENT ACTIVITIES IN NORTH VIETNAM

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23 July 1968

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
23 July 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Recent Activities in North Vietnam

Summary

North Vietnam continues its extensive programs to expand a widely dispersed logistic support base south of the 20th Parallel and to repair bomb-damaged facilities to the north.

New logistic support areas with revetted facilities have been observed along Routes 100 and 101, alternates to Route 1A. Route 137/912, a main supply route into Laos, has been the scene of extensive repair activity. The emphasis on highway and inland water facilities and the lack of rail activity south of the 19th Parallel reflect an apparent decision not to try to maintain rail service to Vinh under conditions of sustained air attack.

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*Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Economic Research and the Office of Current Intelligence and was coordinated with the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.*

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North of the 20th Parallel repair activity is focused on the main Hanoi-Haiphong power network which has now been restored to 50 percent of its generating capacity. There are indications that the Haiphong cement plant will soon go into limited production. Restoration of other bomb-damaged facilities is apparently not being pushed vigorously.

An increasing use of inland waterways between Haiphong and the interior may reflect in part the high water levels on the Red River. Several highway pontoon bypasses are temporarily unserviceable as a result of seasonal flooding.

Construction of a second runway at Kep Airfield is proceeding rapidly.

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A sharp drop in foreign shipping indicates that seaborne imports in July may decrease sharply. The reduced level of imports may be a temporary response to congestion in Haiphong resulting from the record level of imports during recent months. The number of foreign ships in port is at a new high. Despite the port congestion, imports are being moved from the port without difficulty.

The North Vietnamese trade delegation is in Peking for negotiations on economic and military aid. New aid agreements have been signed this year with all of the Eastern European Communist countries except Albania, and with the USSR and North Korea.

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South of the 20th ParallelStorage and Transshipment Areas

25X1 [redacted] several new truck parks and supply/transshipment areas have been developed along the routes immediately north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Several logistic support areas have been observed along Route 100, a convenient alternate to Route 1A (see the map);

[redacted] 25X1  
Additional support areas have also been observed along Route 101, an alternate to both Routes 1A and 100. In most cases, the areas contained re vetted facilities for ammunition storage, re vetted truck stalls, and POL drums.

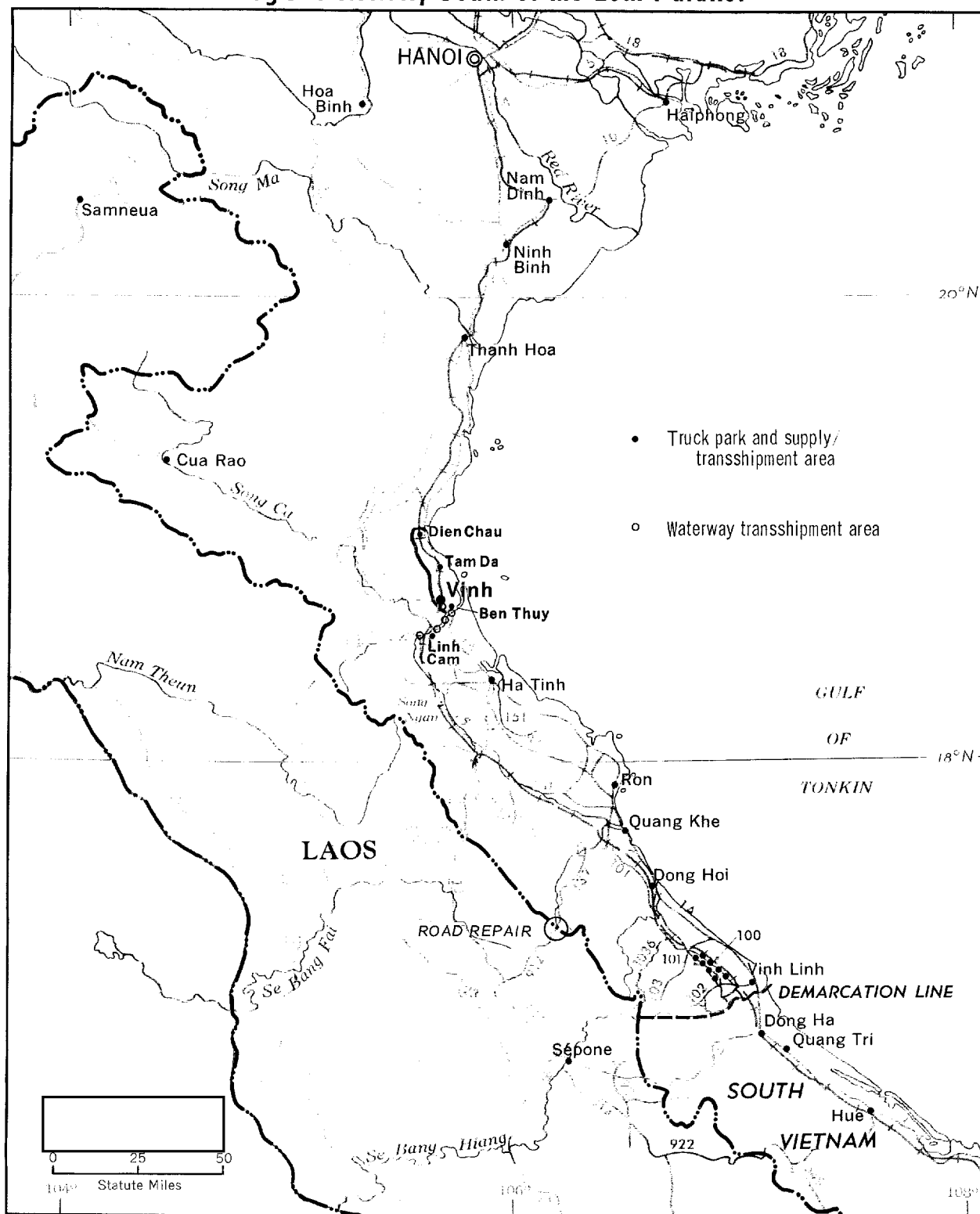
2. The North Vietnamese have been expanding the number of transshipment areas along the two important rivers in the Vinh area -- the Song Ca and the Song Ngan. Numerous small transshipment areas have been noted from the mouth of the Song Ca to Linh Cam, a distance of about 20 nautical miles. While the larger storage and transshipment areas at Vinh, Ben Thuy, and Linh Cam continue to be active, the smaller transshipment areas serve to further disperse this activity. The primitive nature of these facilities, consisting of a cleared area near a river bank and access road, reduces their vulnerability to air attack.

Repair Activities

3. [redacted] 25X1  
extensive repair activity on Route 137 near the Laotian border and on Route 912 just across the border. Route 137/912 is a main supply route into the panhandle of Laos and has been under heavy attack during the last three months. The heavy rainfall in Laos has probably contributed to the need for this construction effort.

4. There is evidence of some repair work on the railroad bridges at Dien Chau, just south of the 19th Parallel and 25 miles north of Vinh. The bridges at this crossing have been interdicted since about mid-May, restricting rail traffic south of the 19th Parallel to shuttle operations.

# **NORTH VIETNAM: Logistic Activity South of the 20th Parallel**



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The almost daily attacks against the bridges have undoubtedly hampered these reconstruction efforts. The railroad bridges at Tam Da, about 13 miles south of Dien Chau, have also been under concentrated attack during the last three months. There is no evidence of the North Vietnamese repairing these crossings. [REDACTED] that several bypass roads have been built in the area and that cargoes formerly moved by rail are now being moved by truck. The lack of rail activity in the Vinh Railroad Yard reflects an apparent decision to rely on truck movements rather than to maintain rail service to Vinh under conditions of sustained air attack.

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### Truck Traffic

5. [REDACTED] again higher than the previous week's total and were more than 30 percent greater than the weekly average noted since 1 April. Better weather over the coastal plains was probably responsible for a large share of the increase. The heaviest traffic continued to be observed along Routes 101 and 137. The number of trucks reported destroyed or damaged also remained high this week, with the total more than 40 percent above the weekly average recorded since 1 April, as shown in the following tabulation:

	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Total Destroyed or Damaged</u>	<u>Effective Losses <sup>a/</sup></u>
This week b/ (15-21 July)	947	209	73	282	175
Last week (8-14 July)	840	237	102	339	204
Weekly average (Since 1 April)	705	117	81	198	108

a. Effective losses are computed by deflating reports of destroyed and damaged trucks -- by assuming that 75 percent of those reported destroyed and 25 percent of those reported damaged are actually destroyed and not returned to service.

b. These are preliminary data.





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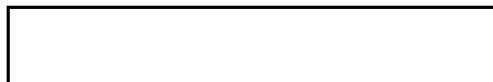
North of the 20th ParallelIndustry

11. The reconstruction of electric powerplants, particularly in the main power network, continues to demonstrate the importance of this branch of industry to the North Vietnamese economy. Eight of the nine plants in the network now are in partial operation, including the Haiphong West Powerplant which had been out of service for a year. Protective blast walls have been observed either under construction or completed at all eight of the plants. Total electric generating capacity in operation is about 50 percent, compared with 40 percent three months ago.



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Logistics

13. The overall capability of the inland waterway system north of the 20th Parallel continues to improve. More efficient use of watercraft is increasingly evident in clearing the port of Haiphong of both bulk POL and dry cargo goods and subsequent movement of these goods in the main water routes of the Red River Delta. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] barges moving in groups of from three to eight on the main water route leading from Haiphong. In the port area, other barge trains appear to be forming at merchant ships being lightered. The distribution of POL by inland watercraft during daylight hours has become particularly noticeable.

14. High water levels on the Red River probably have hindered vehicle use of several highway pontoon bypasses in the Hanoi area. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] however, that the Doumer Bridge was serviceable for light and medium-sized trucks. It is unlikely that railroad and motor truck traffic could pass over the Doumer Bridge simultaneously, as the highway portion of the bridge decking probably was still under construction. A highway pontoon bypass bridge several miles south of the Doumer Bridge recently became unserviceable as a result of seasonal flooding, and more than 175 trucks were backed up on the eastern bank. An adjacent ferry apparently was used to ease the bottleneck.

15. The construction of six warehouses has been observed in the Hanoi port area, the largest and most important inland water transshipment facility in North Vietnam. Several warehouses and support buildings were destroyed or damaged in strikes against the port installations during the first quarter of 1968, but these were only a small portion of the total port facilities.

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Airfields

16. The North Vietnamese are moving ahead rapidly on the construction of a second runway at Kep Airfield. The new runway will measure approximately 6,100 by 150 feet and will run perpendicular to the recently extended main runway, which now measures 7,100 by 150 feet.

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Foreign Trade and Aid

17. A decrease in the number of foreign flag ship arrivals to North Vietnam during the first half of July may be partly in response to congestion in Haiphong. As of 16 July, only 20 foreign flag ships had arrived, compared with 58 during the entire month of June. Soviet shipping will be at about last month's level of 20 arrivals. East European shipping is returning to normal after an unusually high number of arrivals in June. A dramatic drop, however, has occurred in shipments from China. Only one Chinese ship and four Free World ships have arrived, compared with 24 Chinese cargoes last month. The decline in arrivals from China may be related to the flooding and civil strife in southern China as well as to congestion in Haiphong port.

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19. The number of foreign dry cargo ships in Haiphong reached a record high of 35 or 36 on 15 July, exceeding the previous record of 33 ships on 30 June. The drop in ship arrivals is not expected to help bring about an improvement in port conditions until at least August. Despite the port congestion, the accumulation of cargo in open storage eased slightly in June.

damage to two of its four coal-loading cranes probably has

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been a major factor in hampering recovery of exports at Cam Pha. [REDACTED]

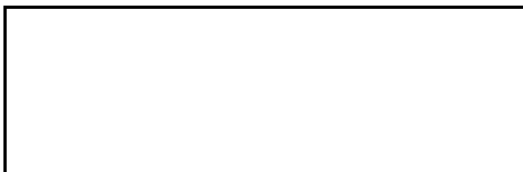
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21. The North Vietnamese aid delegation led by Deputy Premier Le Thanh Nghi is currently in Peking for negotiations on economic and military aid. The delegation arrived on 9 July after signing aid agreements with six Eastern European Communist countries, the Soviet Union, and North Korea. The agreements with the Soviet Union and North Korea were reported to be for military and economic aid. No details were given, however, concerning types of goods, terms of the aid, or scheduling of deliveries. A commodity trade agreement also was signed with North Korea.

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